



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Request to present to Committee – Invest NI and Forum for Alternative Belfast
Date:	10 August 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, Ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>This report comprises two requests for presentations to be made to the Development Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Invest NI- Forum for Alternative Belfast
1.2	<p><u>Invest NI</u></p> <p>As the regional business development agency for Northern Ireland, Invest NI's role is to help grow the local economy. In order to achieve this objective, Invest NI is supporting new and existing businesses to compete internationally through business development and export promotion, and by attracting foreign direct investment to Northern Ireland.</p>
1.3	<p>As part of the Department of Enterprise, Invest NI are tasked with effectively delivering the NI Executive's economic development strategies.</p>
1.4	<p>As Invest NI principally support a cohort of client companies which are capable of export led growth, many of the city's SMEs and micro-businesses do not receive support from Invest NI and are dependent upon the Council's Economic Initiatives for business support.</p>

1.5	In an effort to develop a coherent approach to economic development within the city, officers have worked closely with their counterparts in Invest NI in recent years. This has principally been in the area of local enterprise development, however there has been an ongoing frustration that greater use has not been made of the Council's assets and expertise when it comes to attracting foreign investment.
1.6	This issue has been raised with senior management and board members of Invest NI on numerous occasions in recent times and they have now contacted the Council requesting the opportunity to make a presentation to the Development Committee and explore the potential for greater collaboration between the two organisations in the future.
1.7	<p><u>Forum for Alternative Belfast</u></p> <p>The Forum for Alternative Belfast (FAB) is a 'not for profit' organisation formed in June 2009 with the aim of encouraging debate on how to influence and effect change in the built environment within the city.</p>
1.8	The Forum has held a number of Summer Schools since its launch, the first of which focused on the empty spaces in the centre of Belfast and as a result produced the 'Missing City' map which was launched in City Hall. The second summer school which was held last year focused on the Inner North of the city which is severely impacted upon by the expansive road infrastructure in this area. FAB's proposals set out opportunities to link North Belfast with other parts of the city.
1.9	Members will recall that at its meeting on 27 June, the Committee received a presentation from Road Service setting out options for the development of the York Street Interchange. Each of these options will have a significant impact on this area and FAB have offered to present their proposals to the Committee for consideration as part of its consideration of the Interchange Proposals.

2	Resource Implications
2.1	There are no resource implications associated with these requests.

3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	There are no equality or good relations considerations associated with these requests.

4	Recommendations
4.1	It is recommended that the Committee invite the Forum for Alternative Belfast to present their proposals at the proposed meeting on 23rd August in advance of the Council responding to the Road Service proposals on the York Street Interchange options.
4.2	It is recommended that Invest NI be invited to present to Committee in September 2011.

5	Decision Tracking
5.1	The Director will make the appropriate arrangements based upon the Committee's decision.